

## LIFE "THE PATCH"

ONE OF KANSAS CITY'S UNIQUE COLONIES.

Founded Years Ago Down in the West Bottoms by Croats—Some of Peculiarities of the People—The King.

Just across the state line in Kansas is a colony of foreigners that has been removed bodily from a province in Austria and transported to a dingy, soot-begrimed neighborhood near the great packing houses in the West Bottoms.

The colony has no particular name, and the settlement is known simply as the "Patch." It has been in existence for about eight years, and every resident of this out colony is from the same province in Austria. The first emigrants came from Croatia, one of the best known provinces in Austria, and their friends followed in large numbers until the population is nearly 500 souls. All of these people live in a settlement, two blocks long and about one and a half blocks wide. The houses are small frame structures, and have no regularity of arrangement, consequently no streets or alleys intersect strange settlements. Still every house is numbered, but, like the arrangement of the structures, the numbers have no regularity of arrangement.

It is an unwritten law of the colony that any man who desires to build a house has absolute liberty to do so. When a man builds a house he can build it in someone's front yard if he desires. With such liberties as are allowed, the "Patch" presents a complex appearance. The houses are placed at all angles and many front and back yards have been utilized as building lots. Strange as it may seem, the houses are not allowed to be built on the same lot as the one on which they are built. If a resident happens to awake and find strange fellows standing in front of his house, he is not to be alarmed. The man whose premises have been trespassed upon greets the newcomers with a friendly nod, for he knows that he is of his own race and from Croatia, for no one else will attempt to build a house in the "Patch." The houses are built on the same lot as the one on which they are built. If a resident happens to awake and find strange fellows standing in front of his house, he is not to be alarmed. The man whose premises have been trespassed upon greets the newcomers with a friendly nod, for he knows that he is of his own race and from Croatia, for no one else will attempt to build a house in the "Patch."

## Founding of "The Patch."

The first colonists left Austria on account of the failure of the grape crop, and they are satisfied that it was a timely move, for since the first failure eight years ago the crop has never been satisfactory. The first emigrants came from Croatia, one of the best known provinces in Austria, and their friends followed in large numbers until the population is nearly 500 souls. All of these people live in a settlement, two blocks long and about one and a half blocks wide. The houses are small frame structures, and have no regularity of arrangement, consequently no streets or alleys intersect strange settlements. Still every house is numbered, but, like the arrangement of the structures, the numbers have no regularity of arrangement.

The residents of the "Patch" rarely quarrel. This seems strange indeed when it is remembered that 500 persons are crowded together in a space two blocks long and one and a half blocks wide.

Since the colony was first settled it has been the custom of the men who desired to marry to send back to Austria for a bride. In most instances the prospective bride is engaged long before she sees her future husband.

A short time ago three Croatian girls came to the "Patch" with the intention of marrying men. The girls had been educated at the last moment and declared that they would not consent to marry until they had seen the men. The "Patch" for some time in order to satisfy themselves that the proposed matches were agreeable. With this object in view, the girls were taken to the homes of the residents could not understand the strange actions of the three girls.

The Croatian brides were severely and declared that their conduct was unparalleled. Finally the girls decided they would marry the men and be satisfied for them and from all accounts the marriages have resulted happily.

The marriage ceremonies are peculiar in the extreme. It is a time of feasting and merrymaking throughout the "Patch." The ceremony is generally performed in a large hall over the houses. The bride and groom receive money instead of the usual useless trinkets that are received at weddings in the United States. Neither the poor nor the rich are exempted from this custom. The friends of the bride and groom are also given money. The friends of the bride and groom are also given money. The friends of the bride and groom are also given money.

## How "The Patch" is Laid Out.

Every married couple in the "Patch" conducts a boarding house. As all of the houses are quite small and generally of one story only, it is necessary for the couple to provide room for the boarders. The boarding house keeper builds bunks on the sides of each room, so that the boarders can sleep on the roofs and on any spot of ground that is not occupied by the houses. The residents of the "Patch" never attempt to learn the complex arrangements of the narrow passageways. They are content to go to the houses and on dark nights lanterns can be seen fitting in and out of the dark recesses of the settlement. The houses are absolutely necessary in warm weather for late stragglers would be a source of danger to the boarders who sleep on the ground.

Like all colonies the "Patch" has a leader and his will is law. While he does not live in the "Patch," his liquor establishment is headquarters. The leader is a man of Irishman. He is the only foreigner who is liked by the Croats and is regarded for his approachable reverence. He speaks their language fluently and controls all important affairs in the "Patch." McLaughlin is a power in politics and he is found by the ties of no particular party. He advises his subjects to support his friends and the result is that it is a rare occurrence when a ticket is placed in the ballot box that is not "McLaughlin."

The "boss" of the "Patch" favors his friends regardless of political faith.

McLaughlin is a man with a romantic history. He was born in Scranton, Pa., 55 years ago, and at an early age he went to the United States man of war. While in the navy, he traveled all over the world and learned to speak many languages. He was in Manila about forty years ago, and it was there that he met a girl named Mary. They were married and lived in the Philippines for a few years. One day a Chinese man came to the house and saw a huge Chinaman attack an American sailor who was also doing duty. McLaughlin fired at the Chinaman and killed him just in time to save the life of the other sailor. The young sailor was greatly moved as soon as he realized that he had taken a human life. In a just cause, and the occurrence made an impression that remains with the "King of the Patch" until this day. Although it has been many years since the occurrence, the old man desires to refer to the affair. McLaughlin left the navy after several years of faithful service and is now contented with the life that he leads as the ruler of an entire colony. He desires to have his name appear in print and is curious whenever he is referred to as the "King of the Patch."

MASON PETERS, JR.

## A Philadelphia 95 Years Old.

The papers of the Quaker City are proud of the fact that a man can live an active and successful life in their town and yet be strong and vigorous at the age of 95. They point to Frederick Fraley, who celebrates his 95th birthday next Sunday, as proof of the fact that it pays to take things quietly in the good old-fashioned Philadelphia way. Mr. Fraley was the treasurer of the Centennial exposition, and is now the president of the Philadelphia board of trade.

## Strong Imaginations.

From the Cleveland Plain Dealer.

William D. McGee says the Spanish writers of fiction are superior to ours.

"That's just what I thought when I used to read their war news."

## A SAFE THAT WILL FLOAT.

This Device Insures the Safety of a Ship's Cargo of Bullion in Case of Wreck or Fire.

From the Philadelphia Record.

The present method of transporting bullion across the ocean may be revolutionized by a device known as the Anderson safe float, now building in the Crescent shipyards, Elizabethport, N. J. The purpose of this invention is to insure the perfect safety of mail matter, gold and valuables in case of fire at sea or shipwreck, and it consists of an elliptical chamber of metal twenty-two feet long and fourteen feet broad, fireproof and watertight. Before the vessel leaves port it is fixed on the after deck. Thieves can no more get into it than into a bank vault, and in case the vessel sinks it floats free until towed into port.

It is kept upright by its form and by the heavy metal which it contains. It is at the bottom. By night its presence is shown by the phosphorescent light, which is ignited by water, and burns with a flame four feet high, calling attention not only to the float but to the boats and passengers that may be near it, thus giving one more safeguard to human life. This light is already used on the float.



THE ANDERSON SAFE FLOAT.

Franklin life-buoys indorsed by the government. Electric lights can be used if preferred, and the inventor has arranged for a fog-horn and a bell to blow and ring automatically, like the bell on a harbor buoy. The float is so arranged that late mail matter may be put in up to the last moment the vessel carrying it leaves the dock.

During the present summer the experimental float now being built is to receive a practical trial. It will be taken to sea, loaded with thirty-four tons and set afloat in the harbor. The float will be observed and the distance at which its light can be seen at sea will be determined. It will be towed ashore, hoisted out upon a pier by a derrick and opened to see how the mail matter is affected by the water, if at all.

As every year several million dollars' worth of bullion is shipped in private checks, drafts and money orders, the value of the invention is self-evident.

## VISCOUNT FINCASTLE, V. C.

War Correspondent and Soldier. Who Won the Victoria Cross While a "Civilian" Pro Tem.

Viscount Fincastle, the eldest son and heir of the Earl of Dunmore of the Scottish peerage, is now visiting in Boston.

He is a man of about 35 years of age, of a robust build, and is the only "civilian" ever decorated with the Victoria cross for an act of military valor.

When the Indian frontier troubles broke out in 1881 Lord Fincastle was a lieutenant in the Royal fusiliers and was acting as an aide-de-camp to the viceroy of India.

He obtained leave of absence from these duties and went to the frontier as a volunteer.

The fighting was of a particularly severe nature, and many losses were sustained on the British side, the officers especially being the targets for the hillmen. In one of these fights the honor of the regiment was saved by the gallant conduct of Lord Fincastle.

He was the only man to be wounded in the fight, and he was the only one to be decorated with the Victoria cross for an act of military valor.

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## A Matter of Business.

From Judge.

Lady: "What do you want to cents for?"

Becky: "I want to see if I can't get a few cents out of you."

It is also of interest on \$200 for one hour, and on \$100 for half an hour. The lady went round to see Russell Sage and, after a long wait, she came back and said: "I don't want to see if I can't get a few cents out of you."

## An Authoritative Command.

From Le Rire.

"What is the weather?"

"The weather, my dear sir, is a condition. Rain is water in the act of falling from the clouds. It is impossible that they should like it."

## An Unpleasant Reminder.

From the Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Jamie doesn't go to church often, but his mamma took him there last Sunday.

"Mamma," he asked in a shrill whisper, "what makes the man's voice shake so?"

"Hush, dear," said mamma, "I don't know."

## Weyler's Forecast.

From the Pittsburg Chronicle.

"I don't think," growled General Weyler, "that my ability as a prophet is recognized as it should be. I have said so many times that Cuba would be taken by the United States, and now it is so."

## Mounted Officer (to defiant recruit)—"In the name of the law I arrest you."

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## DANGER OF LIGHTNING

IS IT GREATER IN THE COUNTRY DISTRICTS?

Effect of the Network of Wires in the Cities—Some Strange Ideas and Traditions About the Fiery Fluid.

From the Detroit Tribune.

It is generally acknowledged, and not without reason, that death by lightning is absolutely painless. It may be instant, and it is generally so. It is a flash of electricity, a portion of time that the thousandth part of a second, and the victim of the lightning stroke never sees the flash accompanying the electric discharge which causes his death.

It is an undoubted fact that a moderate stroke has even proved the remedy of maladies and caused the growth of trees. The people of olden times considered that lightning provided a cure for many ailments, and the subject an interesting folk-lore has grown in the course of ages. For instance, if you chew the splinters of a tree struck by lightning you have a remedy for the toothache. A house which will protect a house, and in many places they used to ring the church bells on the approach of a storm; but this has often proved to be only inviting danger to the fingers. One curious fact the writer has collected in stories about the mouth of rivers or shallow waters after a storm, and they are extremely palatable to eat, and are said to be a great favor at once, and the second day, even when freshly caught, they are not fit to eat.

Some time about the close of the sixteenth century, tradition says, a storm broke over the city of Rome, and the lightning struck the dome of St. Peter's. The thunder was so terrible that the congregation fell prostrate, and on the following day the dome was found to be cracked. The story is a curious one, and it is a pity that the lightning stroke never sees the flash accompanying the electric discharge which causes his death.

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## Country vs. City—Which is Safest?

Most theories about electricity are unsatisfactory, and although most men, to a great extent, are satisfied with the idea of what lightning is, they are not yet practically acquainted with its real nature. Does lightning descend from the clouds, or does it come from the ground? It is a question which has been asked for centuries, and yet there are so many theories about it that it is impossible to know for sure.

The question arises, is it safer, during a storm, to be in the country or in the city? The answer is, it is safer to be in the country. In the city, there are many tall buildings, and the lightning is attracted to them. In the country, there are few tall buildings, and the lightning is less likely to strike.

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## Rules for the Timid.

It would seem then that there was greater immunity from lightning in the country than in the city. A Major Farnell gives certain rules which may be followed by the nervous, and he advises them to be in the country. A Major Farnell gives certain rules which may be followed by the nervous, and he advises them to be in the country.

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## NOBLEMAN A TRAMP.

Count Rosso Dianovich for 37 Years Has Lived as a Hobo and Has Traveled the World Over.

The wandering Austrian nobleman, Count Rosso Dianovich, who for the past thirty-seven years has been traveling on foot around the world visiting every country on the face of the earth, landed in Philadelphia last Monday from San Francisco, after an eventful journey of thirty months. He is collecting data for a book upon the public institutions and the manners and customs of the world.

The count is a peculiar personage. He wears a threadbare coat, much grained in front and of ancient style, a thin derby and a flannel shirt pulled together in front. He is striped an old hand satchel, in which, supposedly, he keeps his changes of underclothing. In reality it contains a lot of dirty newspapers, a few letters, and a newspaper clipping from every city he has visited. He claims to have at home a stock of them showing his progress through Europe, Asia, Africa and the islands of the south.

He is a tramp in appearance, and a tramp by occupation. All through the country he has been known as the "hobo," a title which he very much dislikes, for, as he says, "it makes me look like a beggar, and I am not a beggar. I am a nobleman, and I am independent of the world. I never beg, and I never ask for anything. I am a tramp, and I am a tramp by occupation. All through the country he has been known as the 'hobo,' a title which he very much dislikes, for, as he says, 'it makes me look like a beggar, and I am not a beggar. I am a nobleman, and I am independent of the world. I never beg, and I never ask for anything. I am a tramp, and I am a tramp by occupation. All through the country he has been known as the 'hobo,' a title which he very much dislikes, for, as he says, 'it makes me look like a beggar, and I am not a beggar. I am a nobleman, and I am independent of the world. I never beg, and I never ask for anything. I am a tramp, and I am a tramp by occupation. 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